

Ocker Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103920
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355489
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darrell Foster
Headteacher	Adam Hollyhead
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons and eight teaching staff. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from staff, pupils and 60 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The team inspected the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning and how staff are helped to improve their skills.
- They looked at how the information about pupils' work is used to improve their progress.
- Inspectors evaluated how well leaders and managers promote the opportunities for good outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average sized junior school. It serves the local area. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with 16% from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average at 19%. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average and these include a range of moderate learning needs. There are eight classes. The school has achieved Basic Skills Award, Investors in People and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Ocker Hill Junior School is a satisfactory school. The school gives strong care to its pupils, enabling them to feel safe and to know that there are adults who will help them at any time. Pupils behave well, and are polite and considerate to all in the school. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, and say how much they enjoy school and the activities that they can take part in. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and value the approachability of the staff. 'My child always wants to come to school' and 'great learning environment and the family atmosphere' are representative of the positive comments.

Good links with the nearby infant school mean that pupils make a secure start to the school. Progress for pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory and there are now signs of accelerated progress in reading and sometimes better than expected progress in writing. Progress in mathematics is improving but is hindered by the lack of opportunity to practise well-developed calculation skills in problem solving situations across the curriculum. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good practice. In the better lessons, work challenges all pupils because teachers use their previous assessments to plan appropriate activities, but, in other lessons, teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. In all classes pupils are skilled at discussing their work with their partner and then sharing that information with the whole class. However, they are not always helped to express that information in coherent, well-structured sentences and this is reflected in some pupils' writing where sentence construction and punctuation can sometimes limit the progress.

Leaders and managers have used a range of strategies to monitor the work of the school and have made considerable improvements since the previous inspection. They have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses with clearly identified priorities which are rightly focused on raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics, and as a result the rate of progress in these subjects is increasing. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and interventions quickly put in place if any fall behind. Recently appointed middle managers are gaining a clear view of their subjects. All this shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may

- receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5
- inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics by planning problem solving experiences across the curriculum.
- Raise standards further in writing by developing pupils' sentence construction and punctuation skills in discussion, answering questions and in their written work.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that the large majority is good or better by:
 - ensuring that expectations of pupils' outcomes are suitably challenging for all pupils
 - using questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding of their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement for most pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is satisfactory. They start school with standards that have been just below average and are now rising. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is just below average. Pupils are able to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their lessons because they understand their work and are keen to do well. Adults ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can discuss their work and are able to keep focused on the task and as a result they are able to achieve satisfactorily. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged enough, but the school now has evidence to show that they are beginning to achieve well. All pupils have opportunities to assess their own and others' work and this helps them understand how to make improvements.

Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They also know how to act safely when using modern technology. They are confident of the help they will receive from the adults in school if they have any concerns or worries, '...you just know they are going to help' was one pupil's comment. Pupils are involved in checking on health and safety issues in school and undertake risk assessments that they then report to the governing body. Pupils play well together and say that they enjoy playtimes, where there is plenty to do, and that there are no problems with bullying or behaviour that spoils their lessons or play. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy through what they eat and the regular exercise they can take, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, as reflected in the Healthy Schools status. The climbing wall is a favourite for playtime activity. The allotment gives all pupils a chance to be involved in growing their own flowers and vegetables and to enjoy working outside.

Pupils take on various roles of responsibility in the school as prefects, librarians and playground buddies. The democratically elected school council makes a strong contribution to school life and has had a major influence on charity fund raising ideas. They have also made moves to understand how other councils work by linking up with the secondary school council. Pupils contribute to their local community through involvement with the church, rotary club and local arts partnership. They are confident users of information and communication technology and are developing confidence in applying the basic skills of literacy, particularly, in a range of contexts. Attendance is above average and the school is working effectively with parents and carers and other agencies to improve the attendance of the few whose attendance is low.

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Assemblies give pupils good opportunities to reflect on world events and how these affect them. In lessons they reflect on their work. They have the opportunity to play a range of musical instruments; Year 3 are developing confident skills in playing the ukulele and can recognise and play basic chords to accompany their singing. Various cultural activities such as drama, visits to places of interest and visitors bringing skills, such as those of the circus, are threaded throughout the curriculum. They are extending their understanding of other cultures through such events as an international themed week.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, questioning is used effectively to challenge all pupils in their thinking and enable them to make good progress. Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the appropriate language and then write their own myth, supporting their study of the Greeks. Year 3 pupils are constantly challenged to explain their thinking and understand the terminology as they devise their own success criteria for their work on fractions. In less successful lessons, the tasks do not challenge all pupils enough and too long is spent in explaining the tasks so that time is wasted. Marking in books is thorough, relates to the lesson objective and gives pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work. Pupils understand their targets and some know the levels they are working at. Other adults in the classroom give effective support to different groups of pupils, and are particularly effective in supporting those with special educational

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needs and/or disabilities. All adults in school are committed to ensuring that pupils feel valued, safe and secure. Strong transition between year groups and schools are a positive feature in enabling pupils to make progress.

Pupils enjoy the curriculum and they particularly appreciate the visits and visitors that enhance their experiences and learning. The thematic curriculum creates links between science, history and geography and sometimes English. Links with other subjects are not yet clearly identified. Opportunities to work with professionals in music and sport enhance the experiences of the pupils. There is a range of extra-curricular clubs and these are well attended. The school focus on paired talking and the development of drama skills makes a strong contribution to the development of their personal development and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is working tenaciously to secure school improvement, and teamwork throughout the school is good as recognised in the award of Investors in People. There has been an effective focus on the development and monitoring of teachers' planning and marking and this has had a beneficial impact in ensuring that pupils know how well they are doing. The tracking of pupils' progress enables discussions between staff to focus on those needing extra support. The Basic Skills award acknowledges these developments and these measures are now beginning to accelerate pupils' progress. However, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in ensuring that good teaching is consistent across the school and that the effective assessment now in place is used to plan appropriately challenging tasks for pupils. Middle leaders have completed comprehensive training, but have not yet had time for them to fully develop their role.

The governing body supports the school and ensures that all statutory requirements are in place. They particularly ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and implemented effectively. The site is very secure and the suitability of adults to work with pupils is very rigorously checked and recorded. Their insights into the life of the school, and any consequent challenge, are currently limited by the amount of time they are able to spend in visiting during the school day. Parents and carers are supportive of the school, they are kept well informed and action is taken to address any concerns that they may have. The school's links with external agencies are particularly strong and these have a highly beneficial impact on the support provided for vulnerable pupils.

Leaders and managers satisfactorily promote equal opportunities, so that most groups of pupils are able to make progress similar to that of others. Improvements to the building ensure that all pupils can access all parts of the curriculum. The very rare incidents of

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discrimination are tackled effectively. The school understands its context and is a positive and caring community. It acknowledges that developing the pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of the culture of the United Kingdom is an area to develop. Global awareness is raised through such events as International Week and assemblies that focus on other parts of the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned is below average for similar sized primary schools. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The returned questionnaires were mostly positive. Parents and carers praise the approachability of the staff, the learning environment and the family atmosphere. A few parents and carers felt that behaviour is not managed well, but inspection evidence suggests that pupils behave well and that there are effective systems for managing any poor behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ocker Hill Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	57	24	40	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	60	24	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	35	35	58	2	3	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	40	33	55	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	45	31	52	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	45	29	48	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	28	40	67	2	3	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	37	36	60	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	47	31	52	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	35	33	55	6	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	25	42	70	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	45	31	52	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	50	27	45	3	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ocker Hill Junior School, Tipton, DY4 0DS

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We enjoyed joining in your lessons and assemblies and talking to you. Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

You behave well around school and look after each other well.

You enjoy school and feel very safe, knowing that all the adults care a lot about you.

You appreciate chances to take on responsibility in your school and to help others in your community and the wider world.

You know how well you are doing in your work and are able to comment on this.

You come to school regularly.

Your school is satisfactory overall and we have asked your headteacher and the governors to do certain things to make it better. These are:

- to help you make faster progress in mathematics by making sure you have chances to deal with real-life mathematical problems
- improve the standards you achieve in writing by helping you to answer questions carefully and write sentences using good punctuation
- making sure that the work you do and the questions you are asked always challenge you and make you think.

All of you can help by making sure you continue to try your best in all lessons and thinking about how you answer a question.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen

Lead inspector

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